

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON NUMBER AND APPORTIONMENT OF COUNTY BOARD SUPERVISORY DISTRICTS

Meeting Minutes / February 1, 2021 Manitowoc County Office Complex

Attendance: Chairperson Jim Brey, Supervisor Kevin Behnke, Supervisor Rick Gerroll, Supervisor Jamie Aulik, Supervisor Jim Baumann, Supervisor Rick Henrickson, Supervisor Susie Maresh, Supervisor Rita Metzger, and Supervisor Ken Sitkiewitz. Also in attendance: Supervisor Tyler Martell and Supervisor Norb Vogt.

Call to Order: Chairperson Brey called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

Committee election of Vice-Chair: Supervisor Baumann nominated Supervisor Aulik. There were no other nominations. Upon voice vote, Supervisor Aulik was elected as Vice-Chair by unanimous vote.

Committee election of Secretary: Supervisor Gerroll nominated Supervisor Metzger. There were no other nominations. Upon voice vote, Supervisor Metzger was elected as Secretary by unanimous vote.

Discussion and action on the number of County Board members for 2022-2032: Chairperson Brey informed the committee that there has been a change in the timeline due to COVID. The final redistricting data will be available after July 31, 2021 compared to the March 31 deadline. He then opened the floor for discussion.

Supervisor Henrickson informed the committee that after he spoke with a few of his constituents, they suggested reducing the number to 15 members. He also mentioned that the chairperson should not be a supervisor of a district.

Chairperson Brey stated that was not possible, the chair needs to be a supervisor of one of the districts.

Supervisor Gerroll mentioned at first he was thinking it may be a good idea to downsize. However, after he reviewed other county governments, he noticed that they are all similar in district size in regards to population. If we downsize, than that would be more committee work. He believes we should stay at 25 members because it does not cost that much. There would not be enough savings in a reduction of numbers.

Supervisor Maresh believes going to 15 members would be too small. She was concerned with the amount of committees and workload that would put on the members. It would be more than a part-time job if the number was lowered. For retired people, more responsibility would be fine. However, more work would discourage young people from becoming involved due to lack of time.

Supervisor Henrickson was concerned reducing the number would deter young people to participate in county government because they work and may not have the time to go to all the committee meetings. We want young blood on the board and reducing the number would not help.

Supervisor Aulik provided data packets which he used to provide his presentation. He stated that the number they are looking for was a flexible number. There was not a minimum member requirement, but there was a maximum of 39 because of the county's population. He presented unofficial numbers of municipal population from 2000 to the present time, which he stated shows a decline for the county. He informed everyone of the voting thresholds and voting efficiency by number of supervisors. He presented the number of supervisors for each county board in the state. He questioned the supervisors in attendance how often they are contacted by their constituents. He has not been contacted since he took office. He also presented the population analysis of the final supervisory district plan from 2012-2022, which shows the number of constituents each district represents. Then he acknowledged the various committees and stated some committees could be combined. This way supervisors wouldn't have to be on so many committees or the number of appointments could be reduced for each committee. He mentioned there are ways to work around having a lower number of supervisors.

Supervisor Behnke stated he liked the size where it is at with 25 members. The cost to have 25 is not high. There is a good balance between the city and rural supervisors. The committee meetings used to be during the day, but were moved to the afternoon to try to accommodate young people, but they are busy with work and kids. He believes his district size is big enough for one supervisor. He suggested the number stay at 25. He said maybe go down a few, but not to 15.

Supervisor Baumann mentioned we should wait for the census and then base the number from there. He was thinking 19 or 20 members.

Chairperson Brey mentioned we do not want to wait that long to set the number. We want to provide Planning and Zoning with the number now to avoid a delay in drawing the maps.

Supervisor Metzger stated she likes the board at 25 members and has enough work with the 3 committees she is on. If younger people would run, that do work, it may be a lot for them to be on 4 or 5 committees.

Supervisor Maresh stated she likes the board at 25 members as well. She mentioned having the separate standing committees allows for the ability to have a quick meeting before a county board meeting if needed. If we combine the committees, then the meetings may take longer. She believes the county board runs well with the 25.

Supervisor Aulik mentioned that to be fair to Planning and Zoning a number should be set. This allows them the ability to start creating the maps.

Supervisor Gerroll questioned how big of an increase in efficiency would there be if the number was lowered. It seems going lower causes a problem with workload and finding someone to run for a position. How are we benefiting by reducing the number besides saving cost on some salaries. He states 25 is fine.

Supervisor Sitkiewitz considered lowering the number as well, until he started to compare the city lines with the county lines. If there is no benefit to reducing the number, then stick to 25 members.

Chairperson Brey thanked the committee for the good discussion. He considered going to 13 members, but after the last few years that has changed. The way the city supervisors and rural supervisors work together has changed as well. Now we work together instead of against each other. The supervisors have a good attitude and look out for the benefit of Manitowoc County. Right now, the city aldermanic districts match the county board supervisor districts. He would support 25 members. People have started to show interest again in county government.

Supervisor Metzger made a motion for the County Board to stay at 25 supervisors, seconded by Supervisor Behnke. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Baumann mentioned that all the years he has been on the board he has enjoyed working with everyone and on the committees he served.

Supervisor Aulik stated that if someone asks him why there are 25 members on the board he would state that there are 85 appointments, which involve a lot of work. We are encouraging younger people to run without overloading them. He was supportive of 25.

Supervisor Martell believes the reason young people do not run is because they do not understand what county government does. The number changing wouldn't have an effect on the number of young people becoming more involved. He believes there needs to be more outreach to help inform the citizens as to what is all involved in regards to the County Board.

Supervisor Sitkiewitz mentioned he spoke with a lot of people as well and was shocked with the number of people in the city that do not know what is going on. There are a lot of ways people can find out when and what meetings are taking place. People need to make the effort to get involved.

Supervisor Metzger mentioned that she does receive calls from her constituents, however the calls pertain to the city alderperson. People think the county board takes care of city matters. They don't understand they are two different governments.

Supervisor Vogt stated there will be a lot of confusion in regards to the city aldermanic districts and the county board districts if the boundaries do not align. He believes this would definitely effect the elections.

Chairperson Brey conducted the vote. Upon vote, the motion passed 9-0.

Adjournment: Supervisor Behnke moved to adjourn, seconded by Supervisor Baumann. Motion passed unanimously. The committee adjourned at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Backus, County Clerk